



Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council

MINUTES

September 20, 2005

2:00 PM

The Rhode Island Emergency Management Headquarters
645 New London Ave. – Cranston, RI

Agenda

I. Call to Order/Attendance

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM. In attendance were:

Matteo Gugliemetti, *RISEO*
Cathy Duquette, *HARI*
Marie Strauss, *RIDEA*
Grant Rogers, *Congressman Langevin*
Tom Gardner, *TSA*
Al Gettman, *DEM*
Leo Kennedy, *Cranston Fire*
Amanda Milkovits, *PROJO*
General Enright, *RI Nat. Guard*
Diana L. Arcand, *RIEMA*
Steven Kenney, *NUWC*
Tom Clupny, *RIPTA*

James Lanni, *RIDPUC*
Roy Nash, *USCG*
Paul Stasiuk, *Narragansett Electric*
Joseph Salter, *TSA*
Peter Popko, *USCG*
Ray LaBelle, *E911*
Douglas Brown, *RIPTA*
Angie Moncada, *American Red Cross*
Chief Robert Warren, *EMA*
Leo D. Messier, *PEMA*
John Fulton, *HEALTH*

II. Approval of Minutes from August 23, 2005

The chairman requested the approval of the previous meeting minutes from July 19, 2005 pending any corrections. The minutes were approved.

I. Introduction

- A. Comments from the Chairman - Lt. Governor Charles J. Fogarty*
- B. Comments from the Vice-Chairman - Brigadier General John Enright*

Chairman Fogarty began by introducing General Enright for comments. General Enright thanked all the people who participated in the recent evacuees who arrived in Rhode Island. The General announced that there will be a tour of the Hurricane Barrier this upcoming Saturday.

Director Robert Warren also followed with thanks to the people who assisted with Hurricane Katrina evacuees.

II. Rhode Island Hurricane Preparedness – Pam Pogue, RIEMA

Chairman Fogarty noted that we haven't had a serious hurricane since 1954 and expressed the need for Rhode Island to be as prepared as possible. Lt. Governor Fogarty that as prepared as we thought we were, we aren't as prepared as we need to be. He introduced Pam Pogue of RIEMA to give an update the council on our preparedness.

Pam Pogue began by stating the need for a statewide evacuation map. The communities of RI need to work together as needed. An evacuation task force has been put together. RIEMA is concerned about storm surge and the amount of people who live near the coast. 2/3 of Rhode Island's population live in coastal communities. In a weak scenario, approximately 85,000 people would need to be evacuated. In the event of an evacuation, questions that arise are how you get people to move, where they will go, how will this impact the roads, how long will it take and how many of these people will have special needs.

The ultimate goal of the evacuation task force assembled was to have one, statewide, digitized evacuation map. In the last year, David Vallee and Pam Pogue met with communities to discuss roads that would be underwater in the event of a storm surge. Steve Cott helped to digitize a map and all the information will be available on a web server online. At this time it is 80% complete. A beta site is already accessible by the people working on it. One idea is to have multiple signs on the evacuation routes on the roads. One for evacuation to higher ground and another for shelter (for example).

Chairman Fogarty asked for a timetable on this map. It was estimated that it would be finished within a month. He then asked about a timetable for the signs on the roads. Ms. Pogue answered that DOT had offered to pay for the signs and that they would hopefully be available within a couple of months. Chairman Fogarty then asked what was available for this year's hurricane season and the answer was that it varied by community. Some communities have complete evacuation plans, and some do not. Chairman Fogarty asked about public education of these evacuation routes and what kinds were available. Armand Randolph of RIEMA responded that they were working on handouts. Chairman Fogarty asked when they would be available and Mr. Randolph responded that they would be available before next hurricane season. Chairman Fogarty reiterated the necessity to have this completed as soon as possible and asked if these handouts would include information on what to do in the event of such an emergency. Mr. Randolph responded that the issue of what to do in an evacuation would be addressed. It was suggested that this information be disseminated in public access shows, posters and papers. Joseph Salter of TSA stated that he would like to be involved in the development of this public information.

Chairman Fogarty asked if RIPTA was involved in the plans for evacuation. RIPTA responded that they have not been contacted regarding statewide evacuation plans. Director Warren stated that last year every city re-wrote emergency operation plans and that a statewide plan was in development. RIEMA is also working with the Nursing Home Association on nursing home evacuation plans, stating that some have plans and some do not. Dr. John Fulton of the Department of Health, stated that all homes are supposed to have a plan.

Joe Salter asked if anyone is working with the school department on evacuation plans. Director Warren responded that a letter was going out to identify community plans. Marie Strauss of DEA announced that there are awareness programs. Leo Messier of PEMA stated that they worked with the Providence School Department, but that private schools are not included in things like shelter evacuation drills and that there may be a need for legislation to make sure private schools are included in these plans. Mr. Messier announced that Prepare Providence day was moved to October 1st, due to weather.

Chairman Fogarty expressed his concern that there was not a hurricane preparedness seminar earlier this summer and asked if there was one planned. Director Warren responded that RIEMA can get one planned. Chairman Fogarty asked how Rhode Island would fair if a hurricane were to hit today and Director Warren responded that local plans are in place, that RIEMA speaks ahead of any storm with FEMA and that areas are coordinated with in the expectation of a storm.

Chairman Fogarty asked if there is a plan in place to understand the chain of command. Director Warren does not expect RI to have a problem with chain of command because there is a plan in place. Chairman Fogarty stated that plans are great but asked if there have been or are plans to test these plans on a regional level. Director Warren stated that tests of these plans have not happened, but they are a good idea. Chairman Fogarty asked about communications issues. Director Warren answered that RI has the 800mhz plan, statewide radio, and redundancy.

III. **Hurricane Katrina Update**– Angie Moncada, *American Red Cross*

Chairman Fogarty thanked Pam Pogue, Director Warren and Armand Randolph for their presentation and hard work. He then introduced Angie Moncada to speak about the evacuees of Hurricane Katrina who recently arrived in Rhode Island.

Ms. Moncada announced that there are plans to coordinate with the children to help introduce them to our schools as soon as possible. Thursday, RIPTA and PEMA materials will be distributed for help on commuting. The Red Cross held a training for over 550 volunteers willing to help out with the Katrina evacuees. A shelter simulation drill in East Greenwich certified over 20 volunteers to set up shelter centers. The Red Cross has partnered with private organizations and 19,000 preparedness packets have been put together. A Tiverton boot drive raised \$28,000 contributing to over \$1.1 million to the RI Red Cross for Katrina relief. Ms. Moncada announced that people willing to make RI their new home have been able to do so.

General Enright reiterated the importance of donors writing “RI Red Cross” on donation checks to ensure that donations make it into our community. Ms. Moncada stated her gratitude for Rhode Islanders incredible generosity.

IV. **West Nile/EEE Update** – RIDEM

Dr. Fulton and Dr. Gettman emphasized the need for education of the public about EEE. Dr. Gettman stated that EEE is out there, especially in the month of September. DEM has placed extra traps where mosquitoes tested positive for EEE. The traps are capturing many mosquitoes, luckily the surge of mosquitoes are happening late in the season and a late rain is good. General Enright asked when the season is expected to end. Dr. Gettman responded it should end when RI receives its first hard frost in October or early November.

V. **New Business/ Comments and/or Suggestions**

Leo Messier of PEMA announced a Providence emergency training day at the Providence Place Mall. General Enright asked about the Narragansett Electric Good Neighbor Energy Fund. It was announced that LIHEAP will help to ensure that as of November 1, people’s energy stay on for 12 to 24 months.

Chairman Fogarty expressed his concern about schools and EEE noting that precautions must be taken and that he hopes that the Department of Health does what it can.

III. **Adjournment**

The Lt. Governor motioned to adjourn and the motion was seconded. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 P.M.